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NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
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ADMINISTRATION

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**ASSESSMENT TEAM REQUESTS PUBLIC COMMENT ON
ACCREDITATION FOR NOAA'S OFFICE FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT**

The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office for Law Enforcement (OLE) will undergo a formal review in April to retain its accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. As part of the review, public comment will be accepted to determine NOAA's ability to meet the standards for accreditation. NOAA is an agency of the Department of Commerce.

Accreditation is a voluntary process for law enforcement agencies to demonstrate their compliance with national law enforcement standards. The overall purpose of the accreditation program is to improve delivery of law enforcement services. The accreditation process will also provide OLE managers assurance that the agency is meeting its internal policies and procedures plus facilitate a solid review of OLE's status and readiness.

During the on-site assessment, a team from the commission will be available to accept comments by telephone at (301) 495-7101 on Monday, April 28, 2003 between 10 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. EDT. Telephone comments are limited to ten minutes and must address the agency's ability to comply with the standards for accreditation. The standards cover OLE's management, organization, administration, communications, property and evidence control, and relationships with other law enforcement agencies. A copy of these standards is available in each division office.

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“Once the review is complete, the commission will determine if NOAA’s Office for Law Enforcement will retain its accreditation status,” said Chief Dale J. Jones, OLE’s chief of enforcement. “Our agency has worked diligently over the past three years to retain this recognition for law enforcement excellence.”

The accreditation manager for NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement is Ms. Paula Stuart, 301 427-2300. Written comments may be sent to the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. at 10302 Eaton Place, Suite 100, Fairfax, Va., 22030. For more information contact the commission at (800) 368-3757.

NOAA’s National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation’s living marine resources through scientific research, management, enforcement, and the conservation of marine mammals and other protected marine species and their habitat.

The Commerce Department’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the predication and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources.

On the Internet:

NOAA - <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries - <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>